

REMARKS

Reconsideration and the timely allowance of the pending claims, in view of the following remarks, are respectfully requested.

In the Final Office Action of September 7, 2006, the Examiner rejected claims 1, 6, and 9, under 35 U.S.C. 102(b), as allegedly being anticipated by Shimizu '951 (U.S. Patent No. 6,262,951); and rejected claim 5, under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), as allegedly being unpatentable over Shimizu '951.

The Examiner also objected to claims 2-4 but indicated that these claims would be allowable if rewritten in independent form.

Although Applicants disagree with the Examiner's rejections, in an effort to expedite the successful examination of this application, Applicants have taken the Examiner's suggestion. As such, by this Amendment, claims 2-4 have been rewritten in independent form and claims 1, and 5-9 have been cancelled, without prejudice or disclaimer. Applicants submit that no new matter has been introduced. Accordingly, the cancellation of the claims have rendered the prior art rejections moot and the claim amendments are patentable and overcome the objections for the reasons presented by the Examiner.

All matters having been addressed, Applicants respectfully requests the entry of this Amendment, the Examiner's reconsideration of this application, and the immediate allowance of all pending claims.

Applicants submit that the entry of this Amendment is proper under 37 C.F.R. §1.116, as the claim changes: (a) place the application in condition for allowance for the reasons discussed herein; (b) *do not require any further consideration as the claim changes employ limitations from originally-filed dependent claims that should have already been searched*; and (c) places the application in better form for an Appeal, should an Appeal be necessary.

Applicant's Counsel remains ready to assist the Examiner in any way to facilitate and expedite the prosecution of this matter. Should the Examiner feel that a personal discussion might be helpful in advancing this case to allowance, the Examiner is invited to telephone the Undersigned.

Please charge any fees associated with the submission of this paper to Deposit Account Number **03-3975**. The Commissioner for Patents is also authorized to credit any over payments to the above-referenced Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

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